

REMARKS

In reply to the personal interview conducted on February 25, 2004 and the Final Office Action dated February 10, 2004, Applicants propose to cancel dependent claims 114 and 215, incorporate the features of dependent claim 114 into independent claim 99, and incorporate the features of dependent claim 215 into independent claims 198 and 213. Because these changes only involve the incorporation of features present in certain dependent claims into the independent claims, this proposed Amendment does not present any new issues that would either require further consideration or materially complicate the issue for purposes of Appeal. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request appropriate entry and consideration of this Amendment. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 99-113, 166- 214, and 216-222 will remain currently pending.

Applicants appreciate Examiner Poinvil's efforts to expedite prosecution of this application during the personal interview on February 25, 2004. During the interview, the Examiner indicated that a Final Office Action was issued on February 10, 2004. In this Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 99-102, 198-199, and 213-216 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kelly et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,449,186) in view of Dettelbach et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,253,166). The Examiner also rejected claims 103-112, 166-212, and 217-222 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kelly et al. and Dettelbach et al., and further in view of Shoolery et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,570,283). In addition, the Examiner rejected claims 113-114 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kelly et al. and Dettelbach et al., and further in view of Kahl et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,936,625).

With respect to these grounds for rejection, Applicants' representative argued that Kelly et al., Dettelbach et al., and Kahl et al., taken either alone or in combination, cannot render current independent claims 99, 198, and 213 unpatentable for the same reasons set forth in the Amendment dated November 25, 2004. Applicants' representative also argued that each of these references failed to disclose or suggest the features recited in dependent claims 100-114, 166-197, 199-212, and 214-222, as discussed in the previous Amendment. The Examiner suggested that if independent claims 99, 198, and 213 were amended to include the features of claims 114 or 215 therein, the application would be in condition for allowance. Applicants' appreciate the Examiner's indication that dependent claims 114 and 215 contain allowable subject matter. Although in disagreement with the Examiner over the patentability of the current independent claims 99, 198, and 213, Applicants propose to amend the claims as the Examiner suggests.

Finally, Applicants' representative requested that the Examiner provide an initialed copy of the Information Disclosure Statement ("IDS") filed on December 2, 2003, evidencing the Examiner's consideration of each of the cited documents. For the Examiner's convenience, Applicants attach a dated stamped copy of this IDS in the attached Appendix A.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 to place claims 99-113, 166-214, and 216-222 in condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed amendments of claims 99, 198, and 215 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, and further since the Examiner has deemed

dependent claims 114 and 215 allowable if rewritten in independent form. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Finally, Applicants submit that the entry of the Amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner continue to dispute the patentability of the pending claims. Applicants, therefore, request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Additionally, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned Applicants' representatives at (202) 408-6052 if it would be helpful to further expedite the prosecution of this application and, thereby, minimize time and expense.

If any extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is required to obtain entry of this response, and not requested by attachment, such extension is hereby requested. If there are any fees due under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or 1.17 that are not enclosed, including any fees required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, please charge those fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: May 10, 2004